

# Seattle Rainier Baseball Club Records

## MsSC 139

### **Background Information:**

Organized baseball (both minor and major league) has enjoyed a varied career in Seattle since 1890. Over the years, Seattle baseball teams have been known by many names: the Reds, the Braves, the Siwashes, the Indians, the Rainiers, the Angels, the Pilots, and the Mariners. Emil Sick, a Pacific Northwest beer baron, purchased the nearly bankrupt Indians in 1937 and, in order to celebrate the return of the Rainier brand name to the Northwest from San Francisco, gave the name to the team.

In addition to the new name, Sick also decided that the Rainiers' venue, Civic Stadium, was inadequate. Consequently, Sick decided to build a new ball park. Sick's Stadium, as it was called, was located on the corner of Rainier Avenue and McClelland Street and sat on the former location of Dugdale Park, which hosted Seattle's other baseball teams between 1913 and 1932. The new \$150,000 stadium and reconstituted Rainier baseball team ushered in a new era of baseball in Seattle.

Between 1937 and 1965 the Rainiers were an integral part of the Pacific Coast League. During their twenty-eight years in Seattle, the Rainiers provided their fans with some great baseball, winning pennants in 1939, 1940, 1941, 1951, and 1955.

By the late 1950s, however, changes in the major and minor leagues made it increasingly difficult for the Rainiers to field a competitive team. Televised coverage of major league games also cut into attendance at Sick's Stadium. These problems caused Sick to sell the Rainiers to the Boston Red Sox in 1961. However, he retained ownership of the stadium, since he believed that it could play an important and potentially lucrative role in the development of a major league team in Seattle. After Sick's death in 1964, successful management of the aging stadium became an expensive problem. Following a careful review of the situation, Sick's Stadium was sold to the City of Seattle in 1965.

### **Scope and Content:**

The Seattle Rainier Baseball Club Records cover the years 1937 to 1970 and are fragmentary. The records provide a limited, inside look at the organization during its rise, heyday, and dissolution. The records are divided into three series: Minutes to Board of Director and Stockholder Meetings, Correspondence, and Stock and Financial Records.

Four of the minutes books, reflecting the club's activities between 1937 and 1953, are indexed according to document type. The minutes books include: Board of Director and Stockholder Meeting Minutes, by-laws of the organization, Oaths of Directors, Resolutions, and various reports. These reports describe the purchase, construction, and maintenance of Sick's Stadium, as well as the activities of some of the more well-known figures in the Club's history, such as Emil Sick, Roscoe Torrance, Jack Lelivelt, Fred Hutchinson, Bill Skiff, Joyner "Jo Jo" White, Bill Lawrence, and Rogers Hornsby. In addition to the specific documents listed in the index, many of the Board of Director Meeting Minutes contain brief notes on player contracts, salaries, and relations between the Club and the Seattle community.

Two boxes of minutes cover the years 1944 to 1957, but are not indexed. These records are organized into five categories: Minutes from Special and Regular Board of Director Meetings, Minutes from Special and Regular Stockholders Meetings, and Minutes from the Advisory Board Meetings.

The Seattle Rainier Baseball Club Correspondence dates primarily from the late 1950s and 1960s. The bulk of the correspondence concerns the decision making process surrounding the disposition of Sick's Seattle Stadium Property during the mid 1960s.

Stock and Financial Records, such as Certificates for Capital Stock of the Seattle Rainier Baseball Club, Inc., Receipts, and a General Ledger. Although the information contained in the ledger is limited, it does provide a glimpse of the financial activities required to develop and maintain the club.

**Inclusive Dates:** 1937 - 1970.

**Restrictions:** None.

**Volume:** 3.5 Linear Feet.

**Accession Number:** 1999.63.1.1

### **Record Series 1: Minutes to Board of Director and Stockholder Meetings.**

**Box 1: Minute Book Number 1, 1937 to 1943, Inclusive.**

**Folder:**

- 1**      **Minutes Book Number 1, 1937 to 1943, Inclusive (*Index*):** An alphabetical index to the 319 page minutes book. Note: The minutes book has been disassembled and placed into legal size folders. The original order of the book has been retained and the index can be used to locate specific items in the folders by page number. Please help us retain this order for future researchers.
- 2**      **Minutes Book Number 1, 1937 to 1943, Inclusive (Pages: 1-54).**
- 3**      **Minutes Book Number 1, 1937 to 1943, Inclusive (Pages: 55-115).**
- 4**      **Minutes Book Number 1, 1937 to 1943, Inclusive (Pages: 116-158).**
- 5**      **Minutes Book Number 1, 1937 to 1943, Inclusive (Pages: 159-199).**  
Special Items:
  - "Activities of the Seattle Rainier Baseball Club for 1941," October 30, 1941, by Roscoe "Torchy" Torrance, Vice-President, (Index Page # 192 ½). A four page narrative summary of the team's problems and achievements during the 1941 baseball season.
- 6**      **Minutes Book Number 1, 1937 to 1943, Inclusive (Pages: 200-234).**
- 7**      **Minutes Book Number 1, 1937 to 1943, Inclusive (Pages: 235-269).**
- 8**      **Minutes Book Number 1, 1937 to 1943, Inclusive (Pages: 270-299).**
- 9**      **Minutes Book Number 1, 1937 to 1943, Inclusive (Pages: 300-319).**

**Box 2: Minutes Book Number 2, 1944 - 47, Inclusive.**

**Folder:**

- 1 **Minutes Book Number 2, 1944 - 47, Inclusive (*Index*):** An alphabetical index to the 176 page minutes book. Note: The minutes book has been disassembled and placed into legal size folders. The original order of the book has been retained and the index can be used to locate specific items in the folders by page number. Please help us retain this order for future researchers.
- 2 **Minutes Book Number 2, 1944 - 47, Inclusive (Pages: 1-36).**
- 3 **Minutes Book Number 2, 1944 - 47, Inclusive (Pages: 37 - 76).**
- 4 **Minutes Book Number 2, 1944 - 47, Inclusive (Pages: 77 - 120).**
- 5 **Minutes Book Number 2, 1944 - 47, Inclusive (Pages: 121 - 165).**
- 6 **Minutes Book Number 2, 1944 -47, Inclusive (Pages: 166 - 176).**

**Box 3: Minutes Book Number 3, 1948 - 52, Inclusive.**

**Folder:**

- 1 **Minutes Book Number 3, 1948 - 52, Inclusive (*Index*):** An alphabetical index to the 263 page minutes book. Note: The minutes book has been disassembled and placed into legal size folders. The original order of the book has been retained and the index can be used to locate specific items in the folders by page number. Please help us retain this order for future researchers.
- 2 **Minutes Book Number 3, 1948 - 52, Inclusive (Pages: 177 - 208).**
- 3 **Minutes Book Number 3, 1948 - 52, Inclusive (Pages: 209 - 239).**
- 4 **Minutes Book Number 3, 1948 - 52, Inclusive (Pages: 240 - 277).**
- 5 **Minutes Book Number 3, 1948 - 52, Inclusive (Pages: 278 - 299).**
- 6 **Minutes Book Number 3, 1948 - 52, Inclusive (Pages: 300 - 329).**
- 7 **Minutes Book Number 3, 1948 - 52, Inclusive (Pages: 330 - 370).**
- 8 **Minutes Book Number 3, 1948 - 52, Inclusive (Pages: 371- 410).**
- 9 **Minutes Book Number 4, 1953 (*Index*):** An alphabetical index to the approximately 200 page minutes book. Note: The minutes book has been disassembled and placed into legal size folders. The original order of the book has been retained and the index can be used to locate specific items in the folders by page number. However, the final few pages of Minute Book Number 4 were not numbered by the original compiler. Please help us retain this order for future researchers.
- 10 **Minutes Book Number 4, 1953 (Pages: 411 - 439).**
- 11 **Minutes Book Number 4, 1953 (Pages: 440 - Unnumbered).**

**Box 4: Board of Director and Stockholder Meeting Minutes, 1944 -'49.**

**Folder:**

- 1        **List of Stockholders, 2/18/44:** A list of Seattle Rainier Baseball Club stockholders and the number of their shares.
  
2.        **Special Board of Directors Meeting, 11/26/45:** Minutes, contracts, and other documents for the thirty-five minute meeting. Among the items discussed at the meeting were the renewal of Bill Skiff's contract as Team Manager for the 1946 and '47 baseball seasons. Skiff's contract is also included among the materials. And the rehiring of Roscoe Torrance as Vice-President following his service as a Major in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II.
  
3.        **8<sup>th</sup> Annual Board of Directors Meeting, 11/26/45:** Minutes and other documents for the fifteen minute meeting.
  
4.        **8<sup>th</sup> Annual Stockholders Meeting, 11/26/45:** Minutes and other documents for the forty-five minute meeting.
  
5.        **Special Board of Directors Meeting, 6/10/46:** Minutes and other documents for the one hundred minute meeting. Among the items discussed at the meeting were the continued employment of Bill Skiff. Skiff's employment was placed in jeopardy by the team's poor performance and his suspension from the league following his assault of an umpire. Skiff also directed profanity at spectators and other officials during several games. Ultimately, Skiff was forced to resign on June 19, 1946. Joyner C. White was then hired as Team Manager. White's contract is included among the documents. The Al Niemec Case is also discussed.
  
6.        **Special Board of Directors Meeting, 11/25/46:** Minutes and other documents for the thirty minute meeting. Among the items discussed were the forced resignation of Skiff and the subsequent financial settlement. Several pieces of correspondence describe the rationale behind these moves. The hiring and salary of Joyner White is also discussed.
  
7.        **9<sup>th</sup> Annual Board of Directors Meeting, 11/25/46:** Minutes and other documents for the fifteen minute meeting. Among the items discussed were the business changes following several management resignations.
  
8.        **9<sup>th</sup> Annual Stockholders Meeting, 11/25/46:** Minutes and other documents for the forty-five minute meeting.
  
- 9        **Special Board of Directors Meeting, 11/24/47:** Minutes and other documents for the forty-five minute meeting. Among the items discussed were contract renewals for Earl Sheely, General Manager, and Roscoe Torrance and repairs to Sick's Stadium.
  
10.       **10<sup>th</sup> Annual Board of Directors Meeting, 11/24/47:** Minutes and other documents for the sixty minute meeting. Among the topics discussed were a working agreement with the Detroit Baseball Club, the organization of a "farm club" in Great Falls, and the Pacific Coast League's effort to be recognized as a major league.
  
11.       **10<sup>th</sup> Annual Stockholders Meeting, 11/24/47:** Minutes and other documents for the fifteen minute meeting.
  
12.       **11<sup>th</sup> Board of Directors Meetings, 4/14/48:** Minutes and other documents for the forty-five minute meeting.

13. **11<sup>th</sup> Annual Stockholders Meeting, 4/14/48:** Minutes and other documents for the forty-five minute meeting. A copy of the agreement between Seattle and Detroit is included among the documents.
14. **Special Board of Directors Meeting, 4/12/49:** Minutes and other documents for the thirty minute meeting.
15. **12<sup>th</sup> Annual Stockholders Meeting, 4/12/49:** Minutes and other documents for the thirty minute meeting.
16. **12<sup>th</sup> Annual Board of Directors Meeting, 4/12/49:** Minutes and other documents for the thirty minute meeting. Among the topics discussed were the sale of liquor in the stadium and establishing next year's spring training camp at Palm Springs, California.
17. **Special Meeting of the Board of Directors, 7/12/49:** Minutes and other documents for the ninety minute meeting. Among the topics discussed were the hiring of an experienced big league manager if and when one became available in the future.
18. **Special Meeting of the Board of Directors, 7/18/49:** Minutes and other documents for the two hour and thirty minute meeting. The main topic of discussion was the resignation of Team Manager Joyner "Jo Jo" White following the rumor that he was about to be fired by the Rainiers. Bill Lawrence, Team Coach, was then promoted to Team Manager for the remainder of the season. Correspondence detailing a \$20,000 donation to the New Children's Hospital Fund is also among the papers.
19. **Special Meeting of the Board of Directors, 9/14/49:** Minutes and other documents for the thirty minute meeting. Among the topics discussed were the retention of Bill Lawrence (who had been doing a good job) as Team Manager until the end of the Major League playing season. Also included: "Attendance figures through Labor Day for years 1948 and 1949." These figures appear to compare the attendance of the other members of the Pacific Coast League.

**Box 5: Board of Director, Stockholder, and Advisory Board Meeting Minutes, 1950 - '57.**

**Folder:**

1. **Special Board of Directors Meeting, 4/4/50:** Minutes and other documents for the thirty minute meeting. A document detailing some of the features of Paul R. Richards contract as Team Manager is included.
2. **13<sup>th</sup> Board of Directors Meeting, 4/4/50:** Minutes and other documents for the thirty minute meeting. Among the items discussed were the hiring of Paul R. Richards as Team Manager and the overall condition of the team.
3. **13<sup>th</sup> Annual Stockholders Meeting, 4/4/50:** Minutes and other documents for the thirty minute meeting.
4. **Stockholders (Correspondence), 11/30/50:** Copies of letters to stockholders asking them to trade their shares of Seattle Rainier Baseball Club for shares in Sick's Seattle Brewing & Malting Company.
5. **Stockholders (Correspondence), 1951 -'53:** Letters concerning the stock swap arrangement between holders of Seattle Rainier Baseball Club stock and Sick's Seattle Brewing & Malting Company.

6. **Special Board of Directors Meeting, 4/11/51:** Minutes and other documents for the sixty minute meeting. Among the topics discussed were the hiring and introduction of Rogers Hornsby as Team Manager and the overall condition of the team.
7. **14<sup>th</sup> Annual Board of Directors Meeting, 4/11/51:** Minutes and other documents for the twenty minute meeting.
8. **14<sup>th</sup> Annual Stockholders Meeting, 4/11/51:** Minutes and other documents for the twenty-five minute meeting.
9. **Special Board of Directors Meeting, 11/26/51:** Minutes and other documents for the sixty minute meeting. Among the topics discussed were Christmas bonuses and the status of the effort to swap Seattle Rainier Baseball Club for Sick's Seattle Brewing & Malting Company stock.
10. **Special Board of Directors Meeting, 4/9/52:** Minutes and other documents for the twenty minute meeting. Information on the salaries of several new company officials, including the new Team Manager William Sweeney, are also included.
11. **15<sup>th</sup> Annual Board of Directors Meeting, 4/9/52:** Minutes and other documents for the fifteen minute meeting. Includes the salary information of company officials.
12. **15<sup>th</sup> Annual Stockholders Meeting, 4/9/52:** Minutes and other documents for the forty minute meeting.
13. **Special Board of Directors Meeting, 9/29/52:** Minutes and other documents for the seventy-five minute meeting. Among the topics discussed were the death of Earl Sheely, General Manager, and who would succeed him and the changing fortunes of the Pacific Coast League. Declining attendance and revenue were affecting the league's profits.
14. **Special Board of Directors Meeting, 4/8/53:** Minutes and other documents for the twenty-five minute meeting. Among the topics discussed were corporate check signing procedures and Leo T. Miller's salary and contract.
15. **16<sup>th</sup> Annual Board of Directors Meeting, 4/8/53:** Minutes and other documents for the fifteen minute meeting.
16. **16<sup>th</sup> Annual Stockholders Meeting, 4/8/53:** Minutes and other documents for the thirty minute meeting.
17. **Special Board of Directors Meeting, 9/21/53:** Minutes and other documents for the ninety minute meeting. Among the topics discussed were the resignation of Leo T. Miller and the hiring of Dewey Soriano as General Manager. A tentative 1953 financial statement for the club is also included.
18. **Special Board of Director Meeting, 11/11/53:** Minutes and other documents for the fifty minute meeting. Among the topics discussed were large financial losses and efforts to remodel Sick's Stadium, so as to increase attendance.
19. **Special Stockholders Meeting, 12/14/53:** Minutes and other documents for the thirty minute meeting. The main topic discussed was the merger of Sick's Seattle Baseball Club and Sick's Spokane Brewery with Sick's Seattle Brewing & Malting Company. The stock swap arrangements discussed in prior folders were a part of this business arrangement.

20. **1<sup>st</sup> Annual Advisory Board Meeting, 4/19/55:** Minutes and other documents for the sixty minute meeting. Among the topics discussed were the continued efforts to reverse financial losses and low attendance by rebuilding a competitive team.
21. **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Advisory Board Meeting, 4/30/56:** Minutes and other documents for the thirty minute meeting. Among the topics discussed were the continued efforts to reverse financial losses and low attendance.
22. **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Advisory Board Meeting, 9/16/57:** Minutes and other documents for the two hour and fifteen minute meeting. Among the topics discussed were financial losses and how to deal with an expected “invasion” of the Pacific Coast League’s territory by certain major league clubs. Also included: information on Dewey Soriano’s contract.

## **Record Series 2: Correspondence, 1945 - 1970.**

### **Box 6: Correspondence: Baseball Underwriting, 1970 - Al Niemieć Case, 1945 - 46.**

#### **Folder:**

1. **Correspondence (Baseball Underwriting, 1970):** Several letters covering the efforts of the Northwest Sports and Community Service Foundation to purchase the Seattle Pilots and thereby ensure the continuance of major league sports in Seattle. Essentially, corporations and organizations were approached to help fund this effort through loans or subscriptions.
2. **Correspondence (California Franchise Tax, 1950 - '51):** Letters covering a problem concerning the club’s payment for services rendered in California without having submitted the proper state forms.
3. **Correspondence (Federal Income Tax Findings and Protests, 1950 - 56):** Letters covering income tax issues affecting the club during these years.
4. **Correspondence (Major League Baseball, 1963 - '64):** Letters, reports, and other materials relating to the effort to attract Major League Baseball to Seattle.
5. **Correspondence ( Major League Baseball, Radio & TV Broadcasting, 1960 - '65):** Letters and reports covering the cost and issues surrounding the radio and TV broadcasting of Major League Baseball games in Seattle.
6. **Correspondence ( Al Niemieć Case, 1945 - '46):** Letters and other materials covering the Al Niemieć case. Niemieć played ball for the Rainiers before the outbreak of WWII and wanted to return to this job after the war, which was a legal right following the war. The Rainiers initially rehired Niemieć, but let him go after Spring Training. Niemieć brought a lawsuit against the club over this issue.

### **Box: 7: Correspondence: Sick’s Seattle Stadium Property, 1956 - Sick’s Seattle Stadium Property (Yates, Wood, & McDonald, 1965.)**

#### **Folder:**

- 1 **Correspondence: Sick’s Seattle Stadium Property, 1956:** Letters relating to maintenance and refreshments in Sick’s Seattle Stadium.
2. **Correspondence: Sick’s Seattle Stadium Property, 1964:** Letters detailing the lease of Sick’s Seattle Stadium by Sick’s Seattle Brewing & Malting Company to the Seattle Angels.

3. **Correspondence: Sick's Seattle Stadium Property, 1964:** Letters detailing the lease of Sick's Seattle Stadium by Sick's Seattle Brewing & Malting Company to the Seattle Angels.
4. **Correspondence: Sick's Seattle Stadium Property, 1964 - '65:** Letters detailing the discussion on what to do with the stadium. Several leasing arrangements are also discussed.
5. **Correspondence: Sick's Seattle Stadium Property, 1965:** Letters and reports detailing the discussion on what to do with the stadium. Negotiations with the City of Seattle are covered.
6. **Correspondence: Sick's Seattle Stadium Property, 1965:** Letters and reports detailing the discussion on what to do with the stadium. Negotiations with the City of Seattle are covered.
7. **Correspondence: Sick's Seattle Stadium Property, 1966:** Letters and reports detailing the discussion on what to do with the stadium. The sale of the stadium to the City of Seattle is covered. The folder contains an interesting four page list of "Personal Property at Sick's Stadium Donated to City of Seattle (As of January 3, 1966)."
8. **Correspondence: Sick's Seattle Stadium Property: James H. Bell (Bell Construction Company), 1960 - '62:** Letters and reports covering an inspection and repair of the stadium during the early 1960s.
9. **Correspondence: Sick's Seattle Stadium Property: Disposition of Property, 1964 - '65 (#1):** Letters and reports detailing the financial debate surrounding the sale of the stadium.
10. **Correspondence: Sick's Seattle Stadium Property: Disposition of Property, 1964 - '65 (#2):** Letters and reports detailing the financial debate surrounding the sale of the stadium.
11. **Correspondence: Sick's Seattle Stadium Property: General Appraisal Company, 1957:** A report appraising the value of the stadium at a "depreciated value of \$804,000."
12. **Correspondence: Sick's Seattle Stadium Property: Fenton, Conger, Ballaine, Inc., 1963 - '64:** Letters and other materials covering an appraisal of the stadium at \$1,160,000.
13. **Correspondence: Sick's Seattle Stadium Property: Alan B. Ferguson, 1964 - '65:** Letters reflecting the work of Alan B. Ferguson, President, Rainier Brewing Company, on the management and sale of the stadium.
14. **Correspondence: Sick's Seattle Stadium Property: Harry J. Prior & Associates, 1964:** Letters and reports examining the future use of the stadium.
15. **Correspondence: Sick's Seattle Stadium Property: Larry Smith & Company, Real Estate Consultants, 1963 - '65:** Letters and reports examining the future use of the stadium.
16. **Correspondence: Sick's Seattle Stadium Property: United Northern, Inc., 1956:** Letters and other documents covering the sale of a small portion of stadium property to United Northern.
17. **Correspondence: Sick's Seattle Stadium Property: Yates, Wood, MacDonald, 1965:** Letters relating to another appraisal of the stadium.



**Record Series 3: Stock and Financial Records.****Box 8: Certificates for Capital Stock of the Seattle Rainier Baseball Club, Inc. and Receipts.****Folder:**

1. **Certificates for Capital Stock of the Seattle Rainier Baseball Club, Inc., 1938:** 9 certificates.
2. **Receipts for Capital Stock Certificates, 1938 - 39:** Receipts for certificates #1 through #200.
3. **Receipts for Capital Stock Certificates, 1939 - 41:** Receipts for certificates # 201 through #400.
4. **Receipts for Capital Stock Certificates, 1941 - 53:** Receipts for certificates #401 through #500.

**Box 9: General Ledger** (The entries begin in 1938 and continue into the 1950s).**Folder:**

1. **Cash Book.**
2. **Interim Certificate Register.**
3. **Preferred Register and Journal.**
4. **Preferred Ledger.**
5. **Stock Register and Journal.**
6. **Stock Ledger.**
7. **Closed Accounts (Acme Construction Company - Elzey, James W.) #1.**
8. **Closed Accounts (Erspamer, R.M. - Olmsted, R.W.) #2.**
9. **Closed Accounts (Pacific Car & Foundry Company - Zeilger, N.) #3.**